DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 013 SO 034 528

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TITLE	Growth of Islam. Seventh Grade Activity. Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World.
INSTITUTION	San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, CA.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	14p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Schools of California Online Resources for Education, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 601 North East Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093. E-mail: webmaster@score.rims.k12.ca.us; Web site: http://score.rims.k12.ca.us.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; Foreign Countries; Grade 7; *Islam; *Islamic Culture; Middle Schools; *Muslims; Religion Studies; *Simulation; Social Studies; State Standards; Student Research; Travel
IDENTIFIERS	California; *Syria

ABSTRACT

This seventh grade activity asks students to gather data that will help them understand and appreciate the Islamic way of life and to learn to feel comfortable living with a Muslim family in Syria during the second semester of the school year. The activity states each student will be interviewed by a Fulbright official, expected to keep a scrapbook of experiences before and after the trip, and will present the scrapbook to the class at the project's conclusion. It provides a detailed two step process: (1) daily life and (2) history. It also lists 16 online resources; offers learning advice; discusses evaluation; and addresses conclusion and reflection. The teachers notes section suggests grade level/unit; addresses California state history/social sciences content standards and historical and social science analysis skills; states lesson purpose; notes length of lesson and materials needed; and suggests interdisciplinary connections and adaptations for special needs students. (BT)

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ED 472 013

Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Growth of Islam

Seventh Grade Activity
by Judy Houson

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http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/islam/index.html

2001

SO 034 528

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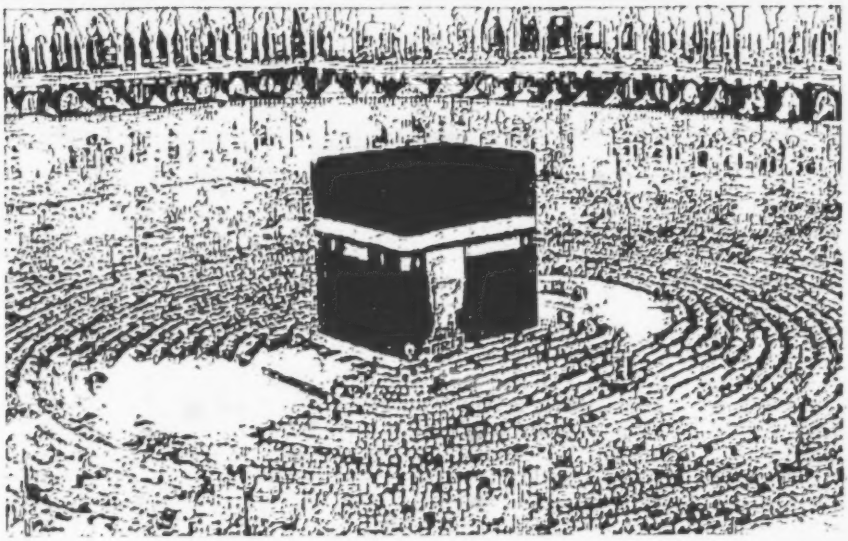

Growth of Islam

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International Exchange Schools
Los Angeles, Calif. 90027
Judy Houson, Director

Dear Enthusiastic Student,

Congratulations on being selected as a participant in this year's foreign exchange student program. Out of the thousands of applicants, you proved to be the kind of student we want to represent our foundation.

You are being assigned to the Al-Fulani family in Damascus, Syria. This family is Muslim. Although the family is religious, they realize that you will not be participating in their religious ceremonies. However, so that you will be comfortable and understanding in their faith and customs, it is our recommendation that you learn more about the Islamic way of life before going to spend a semester with the family. During the time you will be with them, the family will be making their pilgrimage to Mecca. You want to explore the history, experiences, and meaning of the Hajj so that you can talk with your host family.

Included in this packet is information about the religion of Islam and activities for you to complete before your trip. We hope you enjoy learning about a culture that may be new to you.

Once again, congratulations and good luck in your foreign studies.

- *Sincerely,*
  Judy Houson, Director

Photo from,"http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~kbatarfi/islam.html"

Task

You must gather data that will help you understand and appreciate the Islamic way of life so that you will feel comfortable living with a Muslim family in Syria for the second semester of this school year. You may be interviewed by a Fulbright official to ensure your readiness for this trip. You will be expected to keep a scrapbook of your experiences both before and during your stay. You will present your scrapbook to the class at the conclusion of this project. Be sure to look at the list of resources for other sites that will help you with your project.

Process

Step 1 - Daily Life

To begin your search, look at the site "Travelogue by Doug Burnett" at http://traveldoug.com/96syria.htm

- How is the geography of Syria described?
- What kinds of transportation are used?
- How are the people described?
- How do you think you will have to change to adapt to life in Syria?
- Write down your thoughts and take "pictures" for your scrapbook

Continue your search and look at the poem entitled "This is a Letter to Your Beautiful Mind" at this site: http://www.zawaj.com/poems/beautiful_mind.html

- The family you will be living with has a 22 year old daughter and a mother who dress as the woman does in the poem. What will your reaction to them be?
- Describe the types of clothes you plan to take with you in order to respect the values of your host family.
- Read the poem again and find eight phrases that are meaningful to you, Create a "found poem" with them. A "found poem" is a poem found in a piece of literature. Copy each of your phrases onto small

strips of paper. (You should be able to get about ten three-lined strips of paper from a piece of regular notebook paper) Move the strips around until you like the way the poem sounds.
- Put your poem in your scrapbook

In order to further ready yourself to adapt to the culture, you may wish to read some stories at http://www.wco.com/~altaf/story.html and look at some recipes from the area. Look at the Islam Page at http://www.syriagate.com/Syria/about/general/islam.htm to find out more information about Syria.

- Any recipes you try should be noted in your scrapbook. Be sure to include pictures.
- Be sure to include maps and other information

Step 2 - History

Go to Islamic Beliefs and Practices at http://www.iiie.net/Brochures/Brochure-31.html and read about the Prophet Muhammed, The Five Pillars of Faith, and anything else you may be interested in.

- What new information did you gather about Prophet Muhammed?
- Here are a few places for you to visit: The Cave of Hira, The Dome of the Rock http://www.sacredsites.com/1st30/domeof.html], and several of Mt. Arafat
- Take pictures of these places for your scrapbook and also write something about them.

After reading about the Five Pillars of Faith, you must complete the following;

1. Shahada - to show your understanding of this aspect of Islamic faith, you must complete a city banner which uses Arabesque designs and has the name of the city and the Bismillah ("in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" opening words of the Qu'ran) written on it. You might also find a picture of a city banner and explain what the writing means and why it is used on the banner. Be prepared to share your banner with the class at a later time. This site may help: Islamic Language and Art Resources at http://wings.buffalo.edu/sa/ muslim/umma/lang.html

2. Salaat - owing to the sensitive nature of imitating another's form of prayer, you will not be asked to simulate this activity. However, you should show understanding of the meaning of several religious sayings that illustrate Islamic beliefs. Therefore, you are to analyze at least two verses from the Qu'ran and explain what they mean.

3. Ramadan - since the principle act of devotion during this month is fasting you should give up at least one lunch period to work on your banner.

4. Zakaat - you must provide one service to each of the following: your community, your school and your faculty. Be sure to write down the services provided and have each task signed by the person in charge.

5. Hajj - A Muslim, at least once in his lifetime if physically and financially able to do so, is required to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah. Make a map showing the route that your family will take. Also, describe the area they will see. Will they have to take special clothing?

Resources

http://www.arab.net/arabnames/ - names

http://www.arab.net/syria/tour/sy_damascus.html - damascus

http://www.arab.net/syria/geography/sy_map.html - map

http://www.arab.net/syria/history/sy_ancient.html - ancient syria

http://www.arab.net/cuisine/ - abc of arab cuisine

http://www.arab.net/camels/ - a-z of camels

http://www.al-muslim.org/women/women_main.htm - women in Islam

http://www.islamicart.com/ - architecture

http://www.wco.com/~altaf/story.html - a page full of stories

http://www.jannah.org/articles/poems.htmll - poems

http://www.wco.com/~altaf/poetry.html - poetry

http://www.islam-guide.com/frm-ch3-2.htm - the Islam page

http://www.sacredsites.com/1st30/domeof.html - Dome of the Rock

http://almashriq.hiof.no/general/200.religion/hajj-92/ - index of pictures

http://www.islamicity.com/Mosque/uiatm/un_islam.htm

http://wings.buffalo.edu/sa/muslim/umma/lang.html - Islamic language and art resources

Learning Advice

Start your scrapbook NOW! You will need several pieces of 12" by 18" black construction paper. Pretend that you have been a foreign exchange student in Syria for a semester. This project is a scrapbook of your stay and your memoirs. Be sure to include those assignments that you were asked to compete before your trip. Be prepared to share your experiences with the class in a creative way - visual aids, hands-on demonstrations, etc. Hopefully you have taken pictures and written notes about the places you have visited. In other words, do more than just show your scrapbook to your class. Maybe you even recorded sounds or learned a dance or song you could share.

Evaluation

Your journal will be judged on the following areas:

- historical and geographical accuracy
- creativity in your scrapbook
- "photographs" of your trip
- details of the sights, sounds and tastes of your trip

Conclusion

You have had the opportunity to research and learn about a way of life that is different from that which you know. Understanding and respecting other religions and cultures is important to humanity. Perhaps you will want to continue to learn about other religions and cultures.

Reflection

- Describe the research techniques you used to discover about the daily lives of Muslim people in Syria.
- How did you learn about the history of Islam?
- Would you be willing to be an exchange student to a Muslim family in Syria for a semester as a result of this activity? Explain.

Teacher Notes

Grade Level/Unit:

- Grade Seven: The Growth of Islam

H/SS Content Standards:

7.2 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of civilizations of Islam in the Middle Ages, in terms of:

1. the physical features and climate of the Arabian peninsula, its relationship to surrounding bodies of land and water and the relationship between nomadic and sedentary ways of life

2. the origins of Islam and the life and teachings of Muhammad, including Islamic teachings on the connection with Judaism and Christianity

3. the significance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic belief, practice and law, and their influence in Muslims' daily life

4. the expansion of Muslim rule through military conquests and treaties, emphasizing the cultural blending within Muslim civilization and the spread and acceptance of Islam and the Arabic language

5. the growth of cities and the trade routes created among Asia, Africa and Europe, the products and inventions that traveled along these routes (e.g., spices, textiles, paper, steel, new crops), and the role of merchants in Arab society

6. the intellectual exchanges among Muslim scholars of Eurasia and Africa and the contributions Muslim scholars made to later civilizations in the areas of science, geography, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, art, and literature

Historical and Social Science Analysis Skills Grades 6-8

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

3. students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of ...countries.

Research, Evidence and Point of View

3. students distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, essential from incidental information and verifiable from unverifiable information in historical narratives and stories.

5. students detect different historical points of view on events and determine the context in which the statements ere made.

Language Arts Standards, Grade 7: Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials): Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material: Students understand and analyze the differences among various categories of informational materials (e.g., textbooks, newspapers...) in terms of their structure and purpose; analyze text which uses cause and effect patterns. Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of world literature. They articulate the expressed purposes and characteristics of different forms of prose (short story....)

Writing Strategies: Students use research and technology to identify topics; ask questions; and develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation and research. Students write summaries of reading materials that contain materials' main ideas and most significant details, are written in the student;'s own words, except for material quoted from the source, reflect the underlying meaning of the source, not just the superficial details.

Listening and Speaking: Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas clearly and relate to the background interests of the audience: [They] organize information to achieve particular purposes and to appeal to the background and interests of the audience; arrange details, reasons, descriptions, and examples effectively and persuasively in relation to the audience. Students deliver well-organized formal presentations employing traditional rhetorical strategies: They deliver research presentations that include evidence generated through the formal research

process, [and] cite reference sources appropriately.

Purpose of Lesson:

- The purpose of this lesson is to enable students to gain insight into the daily lives of Muslims and to develop empathy for them.

Length of Lesson:

- Two to three weeks

Materials:

- Black construction paper for scrapbook, pencil, paper, glue stick, scissors Internet access, maps, markers, large paper for banner

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Language Arts - poetry, short stories, journal writing Math - estimate the cost of the trip to Syria estimate costs of food, clothing, etc Geography - mapping skills

Adaptations for Special Needs:

- To adapt this lesson to a variety of student needs, the teacher can use one or more of the following suggestions:
    1. Have students work on the project with partners or small groups.
    2. Slow the lesson pace down or speed the lesson pace up
    3. Eliminate or add sections of the lesson to fit the needs of the students

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